

CONCO>E TŪHURA

Full Guide

Degree apprenticeships: What employers need to know

Brenden Mischewski | November 2025





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EMPLOYERS

WELCOME TO THE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP TOOLKIT

A practical guide to designing, delivering, and supporting degree apprenticeships in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Degree apprenticeships are a powerful way to connect learning and earning. They combine a recognised degree with meaningful, paid employment, providing learners with valuable skills, employers with workforce-ready talent, and Aotearoa New Zealand with a more resilient and equitable education system.

This toolkit has been developed to support all those involved in degree apprenticeships, and help make them a meaningful and successful experience.

Whether you're an employer looking to grow your team or upskill your current staff, we've created this resource with you in mind.

OVERVIEW

This guide is designed for employers to help you understand whether degree apprenticeships are right for your business and how you can best work with others to make them a success.

It's one of the outcomes of work carried out by the Construction and Infrastructure Centre of Vocational Excellence (ConCOVE) to understand what is holding New Zealand back from adopting degree apprenticeships more widely.

The degree apprenticeships pilots were set up to promote the mainstream adoption of degree apprenticeships. This work resulted in four main reports:

- Guide for employers (this guide),
- Guide for learners,
- Guide for tertiary education providers,
- Enabling degree apprenticeships – a framework for policymakers.

We acknowledge the many contributors to this guide.

GLOSSARY

Academic advisor (or programme lead)

The staff member who supports apprentices' academic progress at the education provider, helps align workplace evidence to assessment, and participates in reviews between the apprentice, employer and provider.

Account manager (employer-facing)

A designated provider contact who manages the overall relationship with an employer hosting apprentices.

Assessment (dual / workplace-integrated)

Assessment that combines provider-marked academic tasks with verified workplace evidence (logs, observations, attestations, portfolios).

Attestation / verification

A workplace supervisor's formal confirmation that submitted evidence is the apprentice's own work and meets the described standard.

Block release / day-release

Scheduled off-job study time. Block release clusters learning into multi-day/weekly blocks; day-release reserves a regular weekday.

Calibration / moderation

Quality assurance steps that align judgements across assessors (provider and workplace) to ensure consistency and fairness.

Capstone assessment / project

A culminating, workplace-anchored piece of work that demonstrates the integrated achievement of programme outcomes.

CPL / RPL / RCC (Credit for Prior Learning / Recognition of Prior Learning / Recognition of Current Competency)

Processes that credit existing knowledge and skills so apprentices don't repeat learning they can already evidence.

Degree apprenticeship

An earn-and-learn pathway where a person is employed and concurrently completes a recognised degree, with the majority of learning planned, supervised, assessed and credentialled in the workplace.

Degree apprenticeships involve study from level 5 (including New Zealand Diplomas), undergraduate degrees (Diplomas and Bachelor's degrees) or postgraduate level (Honours and Master's degrees).

Dual admissions

Two linked decisions: The employer hires the apprentice and the provider confirms academic readiness (often issued as coordinated, conditional offers).

E-portfolio / evidence log

The tool or space apprentices use to collect workplace artefacts (photos, reports, checklists, reflections) mapped to outcomes.

Graduate Profile Outcomes

The knowledge, skills and behaviours a graduate must demonstrate by completion; the anchor for curriculum, workplace mapping and assessment.

Industry Skills Board (ISB) / professional body / industry association

External partners that represent industry skill needs, set or influence standards and pathways, and often validate programme alignment with practice.

Mentor / workplace buddy

Named colleagues who provide day-to-day coaching, safe practice guidance and help translate work into assessable evidence.

Off-job learning

Provider-led learning (online, hybrid or in-person) that complements and integrates with on-the-job tasks.

On-the-job learning

Planned workplace tasks, rotations and projects that generate authentic evidence.

Pastoral care

Supports for wellbeing and success (e.g., study skills, disability services, cultural safety, escalation routes) consistent with NZ codes and good practice.

Protected study time

Rostered, enforceable time within paid hours for apprentices to engage in off-job learning and assessment tasks.

Quality assurance (work-based)

The combined systems (agreements, site vetting, supervisor preparation, moderation) that assure the credibility of workplace-integrated assessment.

Rotations / clustered placements

Planned movement across teams, sites or functions to ensure breadth of experience and coverage of all outcomes.

Supervisor (workplace)

The named person responsible for day-to-day direction, verification/attestation of evidence and contributing to review and assessment processes.

TEC / NZQA

The Tertiary Education Commission and New Zealand Qualifications Authority are New Zealand government agencies responsible for funding and quality assurance of tertiary education.

Tertiary education providers

Any organisation that is accredited to offer a degree or higher qualification in New Zealand. These organisations include universities, polytechnics, wānanga and private training establishments.

Training agreement

The legally binding agreement between apprentice, employer and provider that establishes the apprenticeship relationship, roles, duties, data-sharing, fees/costs, and dispute/variation clauses.

Training plan

The living schedule that maps graduate profile outcomes to workplace tasks and off-job learning, specifies evidence, rotations, supervisors and the assessment timeline; updated at tripartite reviews.

Tripartite review / three-way check-in

Regular apprentice–employer–provider meetings to monitor progress, adjust the training plan and resolve issues early.

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS – AT A GLANCE

How degree apprenticeships work and what they ask of you

What it is

Your employee earns a degree while working in a related role

You, the tertiary education provider and the apprentice commit to work together to connect real tasks to course outcomes

Your contribution

Named supervisor/coach

On-the-job training

Paid release time for off-job training

Student fees

How it runs

Four days per week on the job, one day per week off-job

Learning is organised around work, and evidence is captured as you go

Regular check-ins with the apprentice's supervisor and academic staff

Rotations and job shadowing provide breadth

What happens

Tertiary education provider works with you to organise the curriculum, assessment and progress reporting

Undertakes recognition of prior learning and current competency

Provides support when risks or delays arise

What you get

More productive staff faster than other options

Higher quality candidates and more motivated staff

Better retention rates

A talent pipeline that you shape

KEY DECISIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

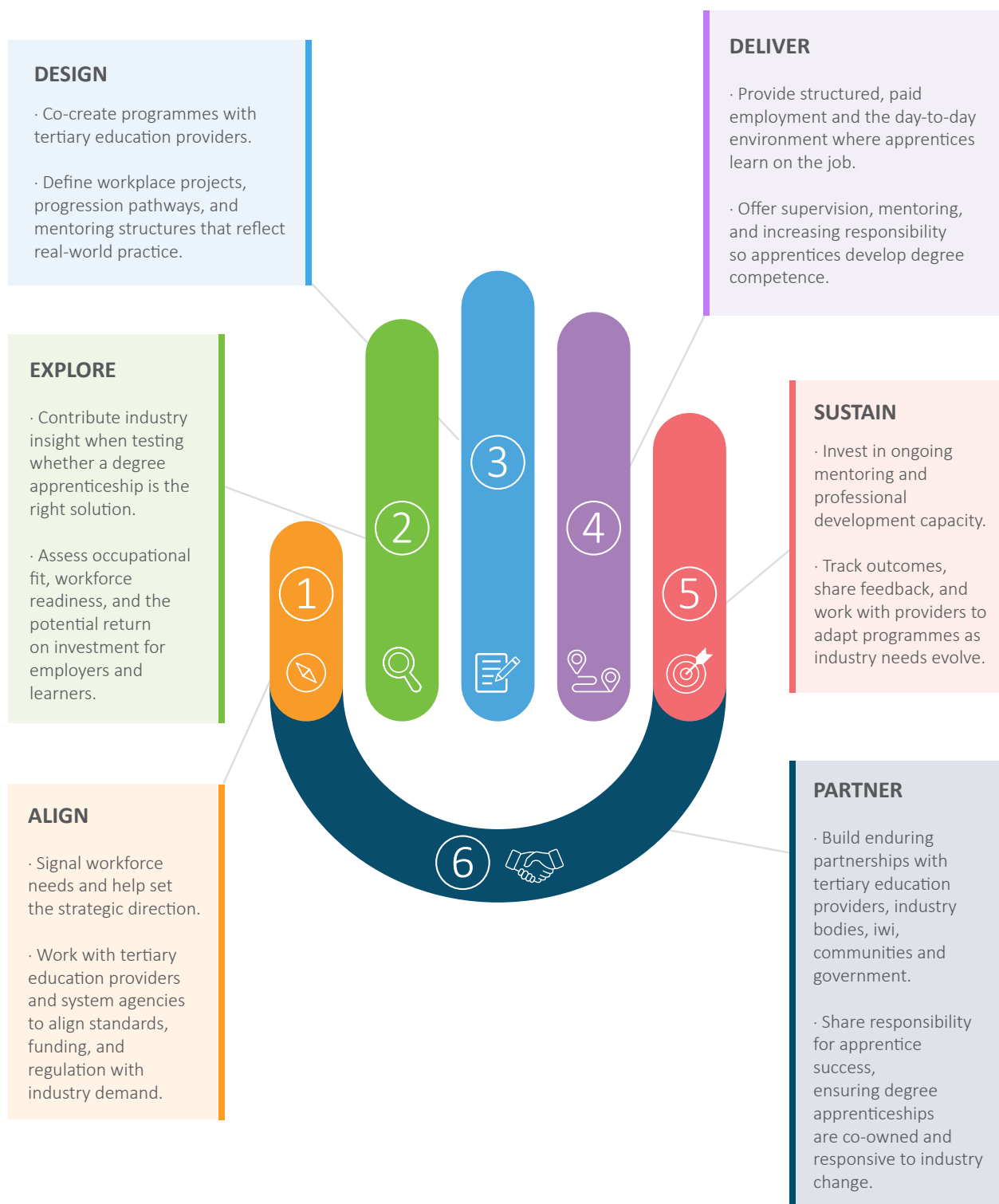
Degree apprenticeships – 90 second decision

These questions will help you decide whether a degree apprenticeship will work for your business



Sidebar: DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS – IN THE HANDS OF EMPLOYERS

Employers are central to the success of degree apprenticeships. Their role spans all six phases of development and delivery, and they ensure programmes remain relevant to industry, learners gain meaningful employment, and the model builds long-term capability for New Zealand.



Don't panic if it looks like a lot.

In our experience, tertiary education providers are keen to make sure that the process is as streamlined and straightforward as possible for you. You can discuss tailoring your involvement to your capabilities and capacity with them.

INTRODUCTION

For employers, the challenge of recruiting, developing and retaining skilled staff has never been greater. And it's just one of many challenges that many of you face.

Degree apprenticeships can form part of your strategy to respond to your skill needs, but you need to know how to make the most of them.

This is where the guide can help you.

It provides employers with the information they need, along with a structured set of strategies to help you make the most of this option.

The guide describes six main phases of the degree apprenticeships lifecycle.



Align

Get system settings and partners
working in sync

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)



Explore

Make the right decisions early

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)



Design

Work together to make your
solutions work for all

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)



Deliver

Create the right learning and support

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)



Sustain

Learn, improve and grow your impact

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)



Partner

Build partnerships that support shared goals

[VEIW GUIDE »](#)

Each phase deals with a different aspect of the degree apprenticeship journey.

Let's get started.

WHAT ARE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS?

Degree apprenticeships fuse the lecture theatre with the workplace. Apprentices are employees first and foremost. They earn a salary while working towards a degree, with much of their learning embedded in their day job. The key thing about degree apprenticeships isn't the name. It's the characteristics, which are:

- Where the learning takes place (mainly in the workplace)
- What the learning involves (a mix of technical, professional and research skills), and
- What the learner is doing (being in paid employment in their relevant profession or a related field).

These programmes aren't made up of traditional lecture-based learning that might have a small component in the workplace (see Sidebar). Often, for those types of programmes, learners might be working on an internship for free or for a token amount, while trying to balance work, family and community commitments.

WHY WOULD DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS WORK FOR MY BUSINESS?

There are two main ways that degree apprenticeships can work for your business:

- They enable you to tailor the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of graduates to your workplace in a way that traditional education and training can't match.
- These are your own employees being trained in your context. So, there's no need to retrain recent graduates or work with them to unlearn practices that don't fit your context.
- They allow you to take control of your recruitment.

Obtaining a place on a degree apprenticeship programme can be highly competitive. They allow you to pick from among the very best candidates.

Learners know that the option of gaining a degree while in paid employment can benefit them in many different ways, making them desirable options.

Sidebar: THE QUICK TAKE FOR EMPLOYERS

- Degree apprenticeships allow individuals to earn a degree while gaining practical work experience. They're the [most immersive form of work-integrated learning](#): planned, supervised, assessed and credentialled in the workplace.
- [Nearly half \(46%\) of employers in Australia](#) identify that apprenticeship-type programmes at Diploma or Degree levels would be appropriate for their businesses, mirroring similar results from New Zealand.
- An [evaluation of degree apprenticeships in the United Kingdom](#) found that 91% of employers agreed that degree apprenticeships addressed technical and professional skills gaps, and 93% found that they were supporting their talent pipeline.
- Degree apprenticeships are best suited for employers and workplaces that have a culture of learning. By that we mean where learning extends beyond immediate job requirements, supports employees to be well-rounded and sees them as part of a community of practice. Roles that are task-focused and offer little time for reflection or questioning are less well-suited.
- Use a degree apprenticeship when the job genuinely needs degree theory plus sustained on-the-job development, and when you can co-design, supervise and assess alongside a provider. The payoff is earlier productivity and a smoother "finishing" phase inside your organisation.
- If a strong placement and graduate induction would achieve the same outcomes with less complexity, choose that. Done well, these programmes broaden who progresses into degree roles while delivering capability that fits your systems and standards.

OKAY, I'M CONVINCED. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Great question. It's essential to understand what it means for you as an employer. (see Sidebar).

Offering an apprenticeship can be very rewarding, but you need to be ready. We developed a practical self-assessment to help you gauge your organisation's readiness to host degree apprentices.

It's not pass–fail; it surfaces what's in place and what needs work so you can plan a realistic pathway.

The value of the checklist lies in providing early insight into the challenges and opportunities ahead, so you can plan a realistic pathway toward readiness.

A: STRATEGIC FIT

1. Do degree apprenticeships align with your workforce needs and long-term strategy?

Think about whether growing your own talent through a degree apprenticeship makes sense for your organisation. These programmes are particularly valuable if you are struggling to recruit staff for roles that require a degree for professional or industry registration, or you have existing staff who you want to provide an opportunity for development.

2. Has your leadership team formally endorsed participation in degree apprenticeships?

Senior buy-in is essential because degree apprenticeships involve multi-year commitments, management and staff time and adjustments to HR policies, supervision practices, and workforce planning. Formal endorsement signals to managers and staff that this is a strategic investment, not a side project. It also ensures you can allocate the time and resources needed to sustain apprentices over several years.

B: RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

3. Can your organisation identify suitable roles that require both degree theory and structured workplace learning?

Not every role needs a degree. A degree apprenticeship works best where the job requires problem-solving, analysis, and higher-level technical knowledge that benefits from being combined with hands-on experience. You should work with tertiary education providers that share your vision to map out the likely tasks an apprentice will do, check that they align with the intended qualification outcomes, and ensure the role provides opportunities to progressively take on more responsibility.

4. Are you prepared for employer-led recruitment in partnership with a tertiary education provider?

For degree apprenticeships, recruitment is often led by the employer rather than the provider. You'll need to think about how you can align employment contracts, job descriptions, and induction processes with the requirements of the degree. You may want to explore joint selection panels with the tertiary education provider and other employers to make sure both academic and workplace readiness are assessed.

C: WORKPLACE SUPPORT

5. Do you have experienced staff who can act as mentors, supervisors, or workplace coaches?

Apprentices are simultaneously employees and learners, so they need structured guidance. Supervisors and mentors will need training in how to support learning, not just work performance. This includes giving feedback, monitoring progress against both workplace and academic goals, and ensuring apprentices aren't left isolated. Talking early with potential supervisors and mentors will help you to understand if degree apprenticeships are a viable option for your business.

6. Are you ready to provide apprentices with dedicated time for off-job learning and assessments?

Degree apprenticeships involve structured off-job learning through a tertiary education provider. Employers must be prepared to release apprentices for classes, online learning, or assessment activities. Work pressures can make this difficult, but apprenticeships only succeed if employers see time away from day-to-day tasks as an investment in capability. You may need rostering flexibility or workload adjustments to balance business needs with the learning requirements of the degree.

D: PARTNERSHIP WITH PROVIDERS

7. Are you willing to co-design and co-deliver aspects of the programme with tertiary education providers?

Successful degree apprenticeships depend on joint ownership. Providers bring academic expertise, but employers provide the real-world context and ensure learning is relevant. You may be asked to help shape curriculum, provide case studies, host site visits, verify that learning has taken place and participate in assessment. Think about your organisation's willingness and capacity to engage deeply and meaningfully in ways that go beyond standard advisory groups.

8. Do you have systems to share information on apprentice progress with the provider?

Apprentices will be assessed in both academic and workplace contexts. Providers need regular input from employers on how apprentices are progressing in practice, and employers need updates on academic progress. This requires open communication channels and, in some cases, systems for sharing data. Clarifying how information flows between you and the provider is critical to avoid gaps.

E: FUNDING AND RESOURCING

9. Have you considered the financial implications (wages, training time, supervision costs)?

Taking on a degree apprenticeship apprentice involves costs such as wages, reduced productivity during training, supervision time, and mentoring. At the same time, apprentices typically become more productive and profitable as they advance through the programme. You should model these costs and benefits.

10. Can your organisation commit to supporting apprentices over the full duration (usually 3–5 years)?

Degree apprenticeships are long-term investments. Apprentices need stable support to succeed, and frequent turnover in supervision or employment undermines outcomes. Consider whether your organisation has the stability, systems, and culture to commit to supporting apprentices throughout their journey. Planning for continuity, e.g. ensuring more than one staff member is equipped to supervise helps reduce risk.

F: QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE

11. Do you understand your responsibilities for workplace health, safety, and wellbeing in the context of apprenticeships?

Employers are responsible for creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for apprentices. Because they're both learners and employees, you will need to meet employment law, health and safety regulations, and any professional standards relevant to the role. While you're not obligated to follow the Code of Good Practice for New Zealand Apprenticeships, you might find the examples of good practice for employers to be a useful guide.

12. Are you prepared to adapt to changes in government policy or industry standards?

Degree apprenticeships are relatively new to New Zealand and the policy settings are still evolving. Over time, Government may introduce new compliance, reporting, or funding requirements. Industry standards may also change. Employers who participate should be ready to adapt, and see themselves as partners in shaping how degree apprenticeships evolve nationally.

Next Steps After Completing the Checklist

Completing this checklist should give you a better sense of your readiness to host degree apprentices. The next steps may include:

- **Identifying priority gaps:** Which questions raised the most uncertainty? These should guide your early planning.
- **Engaging with providers:** Open discussions with tertiary education providers and professional organisations will clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- **Prepare mentors and supervisors:** Work with your tertiary education providers to train and resource staff who will play key support roles.
- **Plan for sustainability:** Model costs, plan for continuity, and embed apprenticeships into workforce strategies.

By working through these steps, your organisation can develop a realistic pathway to readiness, ensuring that degree apprenticeships are beneficial for your business, your staff, and your future workforce.

By completing the checklist, you'll know whether a degree apprenticeship fits your roles, what support you must provide, and the concrete next steps to move from interest to a viable pilot.

Working through it will help you identify where your organisation is already well prepared, and where you may need further planning, consultation, or support from providers, professional organisations and industry bodies.

GETTING READY – WHO DO I NEED AROUND THE TABLE?

Even though employers are at the heart of degree apprenticeships, success is a team effort.

Your initial conversations should include:

- business owners, managers, supervisors and HR staff. The mix will vary according to your size and stage. Smaller or newer businesses can combine roles.
- tertiary education providers, professional bodies, industry groups and community partners.

Your industry skills board can help facilitate these connections.

Some of your employees may have experience with degree apprenticeships, particularly those who have migrated from the United Kingdom or Germany.

Sidebar: THE PERSPECTIVES OF YOUR PARTNERS

This diagram shows the roles and motivations of your partners in your degree apprenticeship journey.

Degree apprenticeships - roles and motivations

Your partners are going to have their own motivations and incentives. Being aware of these going into the initial conversations is crucial.



Business owners

Setting direction and backing it with governance, accountability and resources.

- Strategic talent pipeline, productivity gains, and POI
- Brand/reputation as an employer of choice
- Clear governance, risk management, and compliance confidence
- Evidence of impact (retention, performance, progression)



Managers and supervisors

Coach apprentices day to day, plan meaningful work, give feedback, and protect time for study.

- Reliable capacity on the floor and quality work output
- Clear training plans, assessment timelessness, and support from the provider
- Time and recognition for coaching/mentoring
- Simple processes for feedback and problem-solving



HR

Recruit and onboard for the apprentice, and align policies, integrate existing training, and consider partnerships with other employers.

- Recruitment pipelines and workforce diversity/equity goals
- Fit-for-purpose contracts, policies, and pay/progression pathways
- Onboarding, pastoral support, and performance frameworks for learner-employees
- Data on retention, safety, and wellbeing



Tertiary education providers

Responsible for organising the overall teaching and learning experience.

- Mission fit (learners, industry, communities) and regional/sector focus
- Volume-driven funding > pilots are OK if a pipeline follows
- Compliance certainty (NZQA/CUAP), shared supervision, clear schedules
- Co-design access to real workplaces and outcome data



Professional bodies & industry groups

Make sure that the programme aligns with accreditation/registration frameworks

- Alignment to competency/accreditation frameworks and ethics
- A dependable workforce pipeline and member value
- Consistent supervision and assessment standards
- Evidence of graduate readiness, safety and retention



Community Partners

Involving iwi, Pacific peoples, women's, and disability organisations can widen talent pipelines

- Equity, local jobs, and culturally safe workplaces
- Fair recruitment, living wages, and accessible learning
- Wrap-around support (mentoring, transport, childcare)
- Early involvement and reporting by group (participation, completion, progression)

ROADBLOCK. THERE'S NO DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP IN MY INDUSTRY. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Degree apprenticeships are relatively new in New Zealand, even if they're widely used overseas.

You can advocate for this opportunity by:

1. Talking to your industry skills board.
These groups are responsible for representing your training needs to the government and advising on funding. Explain how degree apprenticeships will make a difference to your business so they can advise the TEC on priorities for investment.
2. Engaging with the professional body for the role.
These groups set professional standards and, crucially, the education pathways for registration. Many of them are already thinking about how best to integrate work and learning and will be keen to understand the needs of your business.
3. Approaching tertiary education providers and encouraging them to develop solutions that meet your needs and work around your workplace.
4. Working with your industry association or chamber of commerce.
They can help you navigate the tertiary education system and connect you with other like-minded businesses.
5. Contacting the degree apprenticeship champions (see Sidebar). They can help you navigate the system and find the right people for you to talk to.
6. Raising the idea with political leaders.
Ministers and your local Member of Parliament need to hear about how the current system might not be working, and most importantly, practical solutions like degree apprenticeships.

Sidebar: DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP CHAMPIONS

You can talk to our degree apprenticeship champions to support your alignment conversations:

Hana Cadzow, Principal Lecturer, Otago Polytechnic
Phone: 027 469 4599 Email: hana.cadzow@op.ac.nz

Mike Crossan, Strategic Advisor, Open Polytechnic
Phone: 04 913 5017 Email: mike.crossan@openpolytechnic.ac.nz

Emmolina May, Academic Staff Member, Toi Ohomai
Phone: 07 557 6076 Email: Emmolina.May@toiohomai.ac.nz

Brenden Mischewski, Managing Director, Mischewski Consulting
Phone: 021 994 808 Email: brenden@mischewski.co.nz

Eve Price, Director, Solutionary
Phone: 021 166 0419 Email: eve.price@solutionary.co.nz

Robert de Roo, Portfolio Manager, Ara Institute of Canterbury
Phone: 021 474 758 Email: robert.deroo@ara.ac.nz

Josh Williams, Head of Consulting, Skills Organisation
Phone: 06 929 1809 Email: josh.williams@scgnz.org

Karsten Zegwaard, Associate Dean/Associate Professor, University of Waikato
Phone: 0274 455 686 Email: karsten.zegwaard@waikato.ac.nz

Sidebar: KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTNERS

Your voice matters and carries real credibility.

You're part of a global movement to make education and training more relevant to employers. Not every door will be the right one or necessarily open to you. So, keep knocking, as others are too.

Working with other employers through professional bodies or industry associations can carry more weight, both in engaging political leaders and helping tertiary education providers to understand that there is a market for what you need.

Promoting degree apprenticeships and the changes needed to make them successful requires clear communication.

Key messages for political leaders

New Zealand's competitiveness will be won by how quickly we turn learners into productive, registered professionals in the jobs that matter, like construction, infrastructure, health, tech, and regional services.

Degree apprenticeships do exactly that. They combine paid work with degree study, allowing people to apply theory to real projects from day one. Time-to-competence falls, productivity rises, and wage growth matches real skills.

Many of our major trading partners are moving faster to take advantage of this opportunity, and we can't afford to be left behind.

If we want faster growth, better value for money, and fairer access to high-skill jobs, degree apprenticeships are the most direct route: they lead to faster productivity, tighter alignment with real-world work, and lower overall system costs.

Because employers co-invest and learners earn while they learn, degree apprenticeships produce more productive workers, faster, at lower cost to the country as a whole.

This is a practical productivity reform, not a new bureaucracy. With a few targeted signals, degree apprenticeships can scale quickly.

What we're asking for is straightforward:

- treat degree apprenticeships as a legitimate, high-status option in the degree system;
- instruct TEC and NZQA to publish enabling guidance this year;
- extend Apprenticeship Boost to these pathways;
- back a national community of practice and sector/regional hubs to get partnerships moving;
- consider light-touch legislative recognition so degree apprenticeships are visible in statute; and
- use procurement and student visa settings, where appropriate, to remove practical barriers.

Employers will meet the government with co-investment, pilot sites, transparent data, and clear commitments on supervision and safeguarding.

These tweaks align funding with outcomes the government cares about: getting people into employment, developing our people and growing the economy.

The earn-and-learn model also reduces underemployment and student support costs, keeps talent in regions, and lessens our reliance on importing skills.

All at a lower cost to the government than other forms of degree study.

Sidebar: KEY MESSAGES FOR PARTNERS CONTINUED

Key messages for tertiary education providers

We want to partner with you on a degree apprenticeship that meets your academic standards and produces job-ready graduates faster.

Our apprentices will be employed, paid, and learning in real project environments while completing the same degree outcomes mapped to your curriculum and assessment standards.

We'll co-design the programme so theory is applied immediately, supervision is trained and resourced, and assessment uses authentic workplace evidence alongside academic work.

The result for you is stronger graduate outcomes, richer teaching, and a visible contribution to regional productivity. This model advances your mission without lowering the bar.

We'll fund supervisor training, provide high-quality context for learning, and share data you can use for quality assurance and NZQA requirements: observed practice, logbooks, competency sign-offs, and an independent capstone jointly governed with your academic team.

Degree apprenticeships expand participation for Māori, Pacific peoples and women in particular, improve retention through paid study, and create applied research opportunities from real problems your staff and students can work on.

Because learners earn and employers co-invest, the overall system cost is lower. Yet time-to-competence and registration is faster, lifting New Zealand's productivity and competitiveness.

What we're asking from you is a practical partnership:

- appoint an academic lead;
- run a short design sprint with our supervisors to map competencies to courses;
- agree a timetable model (block or day-release) and protected time;
- recognise workplace evidence within your assessment policies; and
- set up joint moderation and an outcomes dashboard (time-to-competence, registration, retention, equity).

We'll bring multi-year cohort commitments, trained supervisors, data transparency, and wrap-around support for learners.

Together, we can graduate the same calibre of professionals sooner, with stronger evidence of capability, and with clear benefits to your mission and the country.

Remember, your tax contributions help fund the tertiary education budget. While you benefit from existing training options, engaging with degree apprenticeships means your business doesn't pay for others to train on the job.

Our report ['Enabling degree apprenticeships- a framework for policymakers'](#) builds on these talking points.



Explore

Make the right decisions early

What you'll know by the end of this section:

- How to determine if the role needs a degree
- Some quick tips to complement what you already do

DOES THE ROLE NEED A DEGREE?

Deciding whether a degree apprenticeship is right for your business means considering whether your business needs degree-qualified staff.

Three criteria you can consider are:

- Regulatory requirements – Is a degree required to meet the professional registration or licensure needed to operate in your industry currently or in the near future?
- Complexity- Does the role routinely require advanced theory, design/analysis, or high-stakes decisions where public safety, compliance, or significant cost is on the line?
- Customary practice – Are degree-qualified people common in your industry or profession?

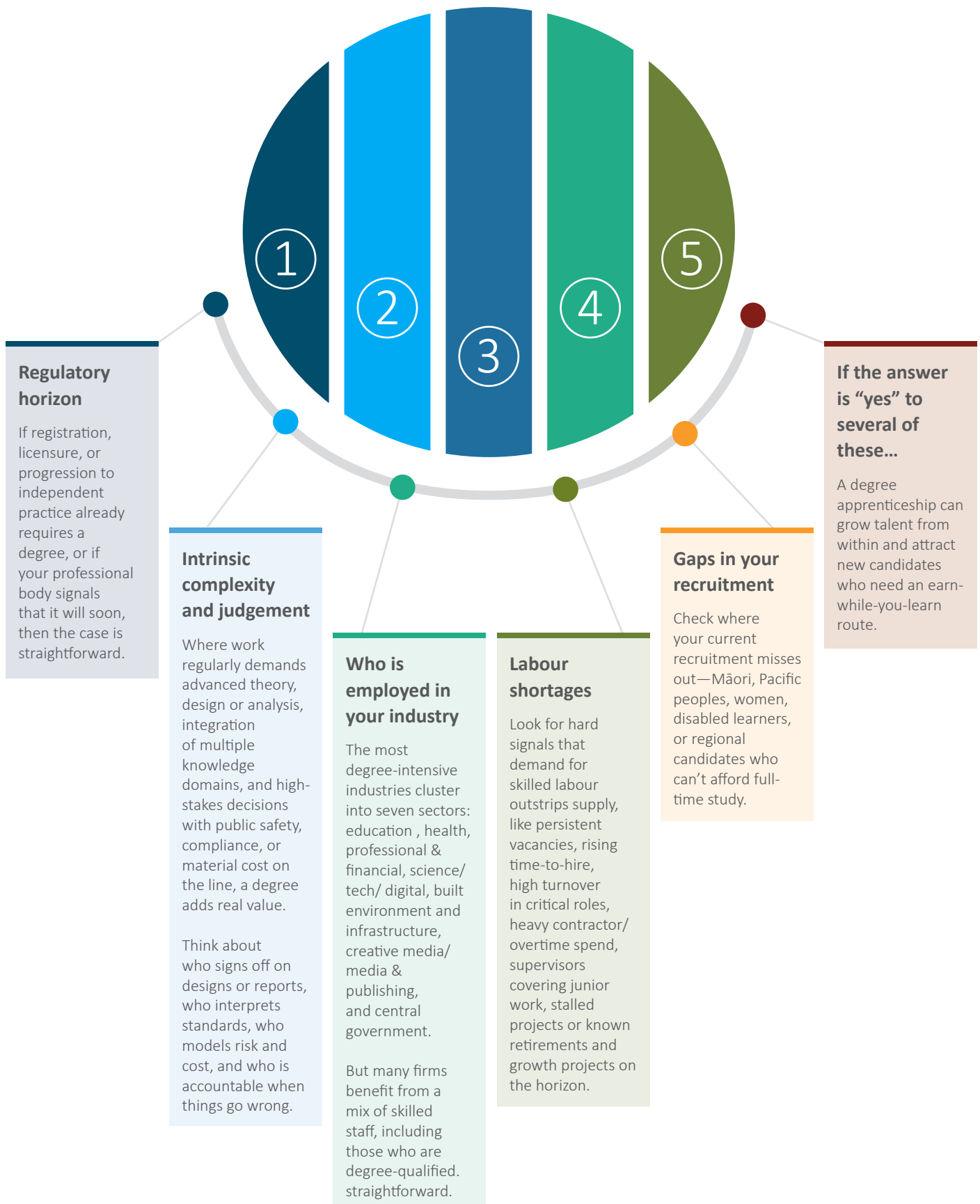
Treat this as a decision about capability, risk, and progression rather than just a credential.

Be realistic, though. Offering a degree pathway in the workplace requires careful consideration, given the cost and effort involved.

Suppose the role is largely procedural, low-risk, or best learned in other settings where the practical work context doesn't matter as much.

In that case, relying on your internal training systems, offering your staff opportunities to complete a vocational apprenticeship or recruiting people with existing qualifications may be a better fit.

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS – IS THIS THE RIGHT CHOICE?



WOULD THIS COMPLEMENT, REPLACE OR DUPLICATE HOW YOUR BUSINESS ALREADY UPSKILLS STAFF?

You likely already engage in a lot of upskilling of your staff on-the-job, even without formal systems.

Map what you already do and what you rely on others to do, whether trade apprenticeships, diplomas/micro-credentials, internships, graduate programmes, and on-the-job upskilling, and be clear about the gap a degree apprenticeship would fill.

A good fit is where a degree apprenticeship builds on and formalises what you already do, giving staff a ladder to progress in their careers and add more value to your business.



Design

Work together to make your
solutions work for all

What you'll know by the end of this section:

- What your role is in setting up the degree
- What roles and duties the apprentice will perform
- How the admission and recruitment process will work
- Who will guide the apprentice
- What training agreements and training plans involve
- What workplace activities can be linked to specific learning outcomes in the degree
- How you can contribute through tasks like verifying that the work is the apprentice's own or providing workplace observations, assessment or feedback

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN SETTING UP THE DEGREE?

New degree apprenticeships are coming on stream steadily, but there are still many gaps in coverage.

Tertiary education providers generally approach the initial set-up of a new degree apprenticeship in two ways:

- By evolving an existing degree to incorporate considerably more work-integrated learning. This option tends to be faster, but it requires an existing degree in the right field.
- By establishing a new degree. This option can take longer but allows more flexibility to build the curriculum from the ground up.

As an employer, you can be involved in these processes as much as or as little as you wish. However, contributing to the initial design work has real advantages, as it allows you to ensure that the final product meets your needs.

The processes that tertiary education providers follow generally involve seeking your input on what the degree will enable learners to do, how the teaching and learning will be sequenced and organised, and how you want to be involved in the learning and assessment that happens on the job.

Look for providers that can offer you a dedicated Account Manager.

Tertiary education providers will have an interest in making sure that your workplace is suitable. They will need to be assured that your workplace is safe and has adequate supervision in place, so expect site visits and detailed discussions about your business.

Each tertiary education provider will approach this process differently, but thinking about your needs first can help you shape the design (see Sidebar).

Sidebar: SETTING UP A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

Employers can help to shape a degree apprenticeship

Route

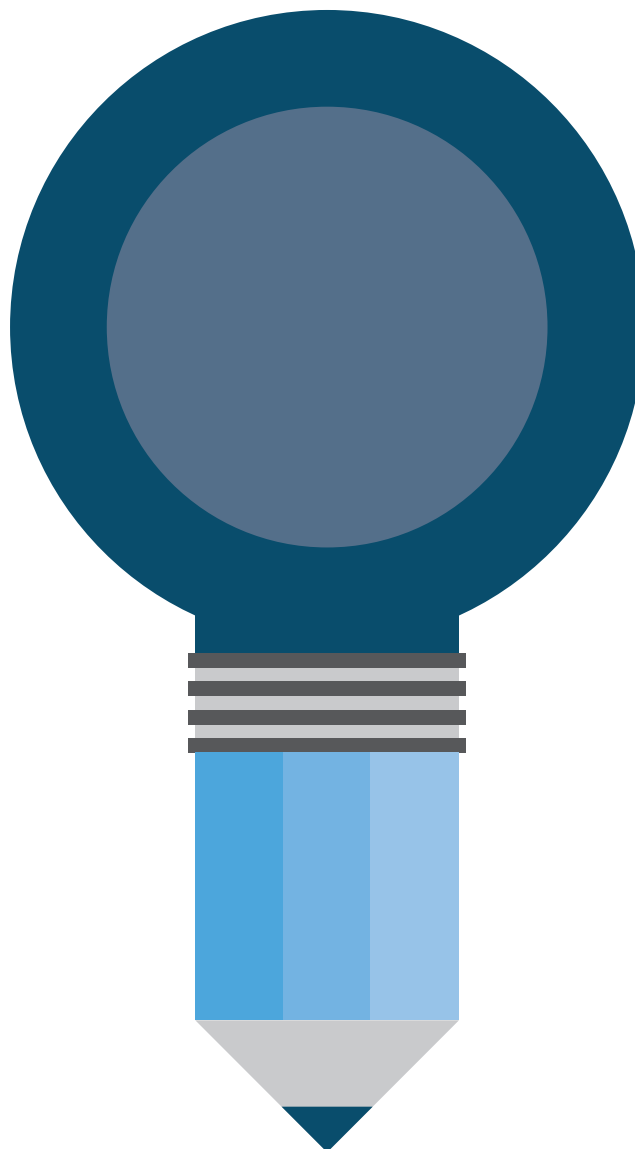
Which setup route will you use (adapting an existing degree or creating a new one), and how will you tailor learning outcomes and sequencing to our job roles, rosters and shift patterns?

Our context

How will you take account of our internal training, standard operating procedures and certifications?

Broadening of learning

How will the degree programme support apprentices to get a well-rounded experience across different contexts?



Role of workplace learning

How will on-the-job learning and assessment work in practice, what evidence will be collected, what part will we play in supervision and co-assessment, and what training and resources will you provide to our supervisors?

Timing

What is the setup timeline and ongoing rhythm (intakes, release time, assessment windows), what progress data and early-alert support will we receive, and how will quality and issue escalation be managed across sites?

WHAT ROLES AND DUTIES WILL THE APPRENTICE PERFORM?

The work that a degree apprentice does will depend on their own existing skills and experience. Someone new to the workforce will have a very different role in your workplace compared to a long-standing staff member who's looking to build on an already strong foundation.

As an employer, you'll be familiar with how the roles and duties of any new staff member can change over time. Some of the key things to look out for with degree apprentices include:

- Each one is an individual.
- They are both employees and learners.
- Their duties need to account for the degree outcomes.
- The degree requirements can help you structure their progression.
- They will need time to get the support they require.
- An apprentice with varied experiences will be more confident and skilled, benefiting your business.

Working through these differences carefully will help ensure you make the most of the opportunity to host an apprentice (see Sidebar).

Sidebar: THINKING ABOUT ROLES AND DUTIES

Each apprentice is an individual.

Apprentices may be new, career-changers, or experienced. The right starting point and pace for their learning will need to vary accordingly.

They are both an employee and learner.

Apprentices have obligations to the tertiary education provider and require protected learning time and scheduling around off-job courses, assessments, and exams.

Their duties need to account for the degree outcomes.

The work they do in your business will need to reflect both your businesses needs and the specific learning outcomes and assessment evidence needed by their degree.



The degree requirements can help you structure their progression.

Their responsibilities and autonomy will increase over time. Their learning on the degree will introduce more complex and advanced concepts and approaches that you can leverage in your business.

They will need time to get the support they require.

They will be expected to work closely with their workplace supervisor, as well as have regular meetings with their academic supervisor.

The need for planned rotations and a capstone project.

Providing the apprentice with opportunities to experience a range of different contexts and projects will help them meet all the requirements of the degree. There are many ways to achieve this, including rotations among other like-minded employers, with clients, and within your own business.

RECRUITING A DEGREE APPRENTICE

Degree apprenticeships require the apprentice to both hold a job and a place in a degree programme.

A good recruitment and application process supports this dual requirement, ensuring that candidates are selected through fair, transparent, and coordinated procedures.

Some good practices to consider include a joint or unified application, co-branded promotional material, and shared screening tools such as interviews, aptitude tests, or diagnostic assessments.

This kind of coordination requires effort, but makes the whole process easy to navigate and gets better quality candidates.

You should think about:

- Clearly defining your role and that of the tertiary education provider.
- Making sure that the academic and employment requirements are advertised together.
- Coordinating the interview and selection process with the tertiary education provider and other employers.
- As part of recruitment, the tertiary education provider may check what skills or knowledge the candidate already has from past work or study. If they can prove it, they won't need to repeat that part of the degree.

Sidebar: RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS MODELS

There is no one-size-fits-all model for recruiting and managing the admission of a degree apprentice

Group Training Scheme

Handles initial recruitment, assessment and matching with host employers before passing candidates on to the tertiary education provider.

A centralised model that ensures consistency and streamlines the experience for learners and employers, making it well-suited for people new to the industry.

Workshops

The tertiary education provider organises admissions workshops or days for multiple employers, utilising simulated activities where employers can select candidates who are a good 'fit' for their organisation.

This model is well-suited for school leavers or those entering the industry. Examples from Australia show that these approaches can generate very high levels of industry from prospective learners and be exceptionally competitive.

Matching services

Connects individuals seeking apprenticeship opportunities with employers looking for apprentices.

New Zealand has several examples of these kinds of approaches from work-based learning, and many providers that require professional and clinical practice or work-integrated learning will have existing networks to draw on to facilitate these opportunities.

This model can work well if the provider has good networks with employers and employers are looking for support with the selection and recruitment of apprentices.

Go it alone

Employers can nominate their own staff to develop their careers and qualifications through degree apprenticeships.

This works well for existing employees who are already embedded in the organisation and ready to upskill into higher-level technical or professional roles.

It also reduces recruitment effort, ensures cultural fit, and supports workforce development goals within the business, but it may require sound systems for recognising current competency.

WHAT DOES THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS INVOLVE?

Degree apprenticeships require employees to be admitted to a tertiary education provider.

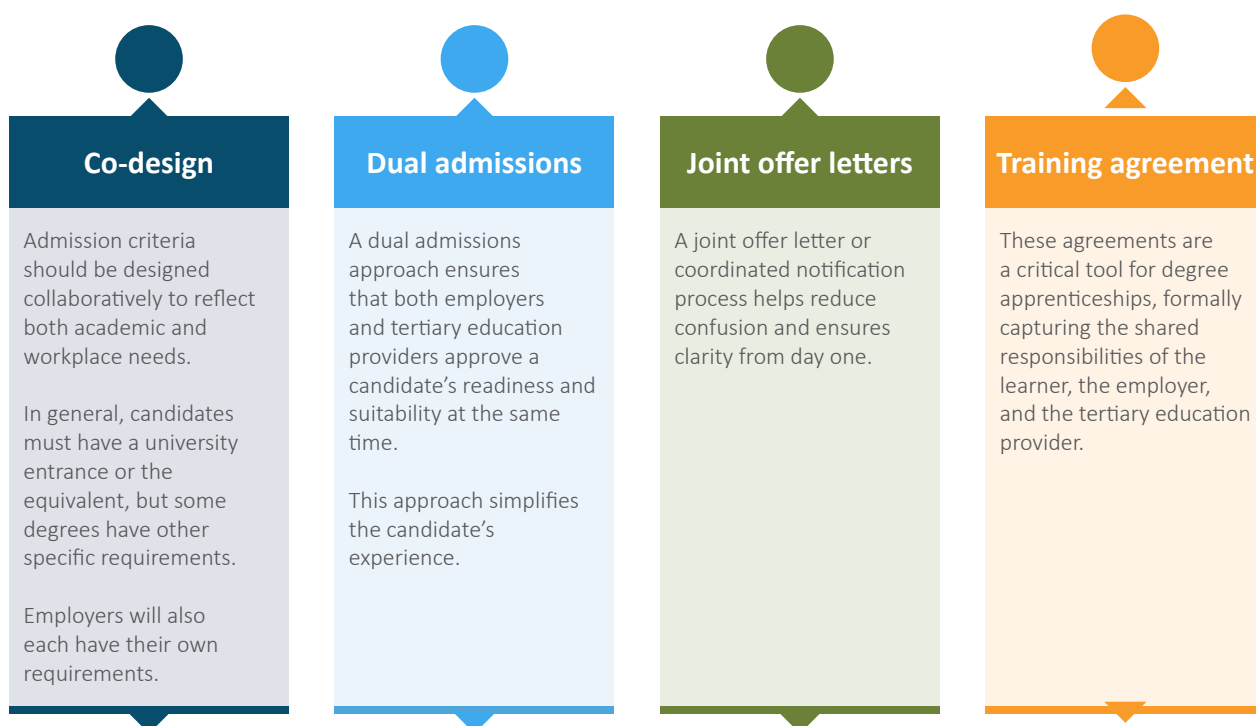
There are several ways that you can approach connecting your employment decision with the admissions process. We believe that dual admissions systems, where employers lead hiring and tertiary education providers confirm academic readiness, help ensure that both practical and academic requirements are met.

Getting this step right involves clear communication and a good understanding of the roles of each party. Think about the following:

- Do you understand the academic admissions criteria?
- Is there a dual admissions process where employers lead hiring and tertiary education providers confirm academic readiness?
- Have you planned for a joint offer letter or coordinated process?
- Have tripartite training agreements been developed and signed before the programme starts?

We have provided more detailed advice about how to structure admissions and recruitment processes in our guide for tertiary education providers, and those organisations will be able to help you navigate this stage.

Sidebar: PLANNING THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS



TRAINING AGREEMENTS AND TRAINING PLANS – AN OVERVIEW

There are currently no minimum standards or requirements for a Training Agreement or Training Plan for a degree apprentice in New Zealand.

But you'll have agreed the specification for each with the tertiary education provider in advance and you will each actively contribute to and sign off on these documents.

When a learner starts your degree apprenticeship, they'll sign two key documents:

Training Agreement = The Contract

- Legal agreement between the learner, employer, and tertiary education provider
- Sets out everyone's rights and responsibilities for the whole apprenticeship
- Covers pay and conditions, protected study time, health and safety, fees/costs, what happens if things change
- Can only be changed if all three parties agree in writing

Training Plan = The Learning Map

- Working document that shows what the learner will learn, when, and how
- Maps degree outcomes to real workplace tasks
- Lists supervisors, rotation schedule, evidence needed, assessment deadlines, support arrangements
- Gets updated every term at three-way reviews

In practice:

- The Training Agreement stays mostly the same throughout the learner's apprenticeship
- The Training Plan changes as the learner progresses - tasks get updated, rotations shift, new evidence gets added
- Both documents work together: the agreement creates the framework, the plan fills in the detail

Your role:

- Read both documents carefully before signing
- Ask questions if anything's unclear
- Contribute to creating the Training Plan- you know what tasks will be required in your workplace
- Suggest updates at your three-way reviews

WHAT WORKPLACE ACTIVITIES CAN BE LINKED TO SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE DEGREE?

Each apprentice needs to show they have the full set of skills and knowledge expected from someone who finishes the degree. This is like the checklist of what a graduate should be able to do (see Sidebar).

The skills checklist for the degree is usually based on what the profession itself says graduates should know and do. This ensures the training matches real industry needs and can take the form of an Apprenticeship Standard or an agreed professional competency requirement.

There are many ways that a graduate can evidence that they have achieved the expected outcomes. Some of this evidence will be developed on the job, while others might require dedicated off-job learning. In every case, how a graduate demonstrates these is something that you'll need to negotiate with the tertiary education provider.

The work that the apprentice does and the on-the-job training you provide will be the main way that these outcomes are developed and demonstrated, but as an employer, you need to work with the tertiary education provider to understand the following:

- How the tertiary education provider will take into account the existing experience of your staff
- Which everyday activities in your business naturally demonstrate each Graduate Profile Outcome
- What extra experiences will be needed to fill the gaps
- What evidence will be produced
- Who will verify the evidence
- When will this happen across the year
- How off-job training (academic coursework, shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and learning support and time to write assignments) will work.

Treat this as a design conversation with the tertiary education provider so the plan is realistic for your workflow and fair to the apprentice.

The results of this conversation will help you understand what you need to put in place so your business is ready for the apprentice and how any gaps will be filled.

The tertiary education provider is generally going to be experienced at doing this, but you can work together to shape the design.

Sidebar: EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Agreeing with the tertiary education provider on how evidence from the workplace will be used provides a firm foundation and helps you think about how your business will benefit from the new skills and competencies that the degree apprentice will develop.



HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO ASSESSMENT?

While you'll be interested in the quality of the evidence assessment that the degree apprentice produces, formal responsibility sits with the tertiary education provider.

There are many ways that the assessment of the apprentice's learning will be organised. These include:

- Provider-led coursework and exams that may draw on workplace cases but are marked by the provider against academic standards.
- Workplace-based assessment and portfolio evidence (e.g. verified reports, observation checklists, witness statements) coordinated between the workplace supervisor and academic advisor.
- Providing opportunities for the apprentice to actively reflect on their experience and receive feedback from both the academic advisor and workplace supervisor.
- Towards the end of the programme, the apprentice will complete a major project that pulls together everything they've learned. This relies on evidence obtained in the workplace, with you confirming the impact and the provider marking it as the final step before graduation.

As an employer, you can work with the tertiary education provider to understand:

- What counts as evidence and how is it judged?
- What happens, when it happens, and what does it require?
- Who does what?

With this information, you'll be able to plan and schedule your contribution, capture the right evidence as work occurs, and provide timely, fair verification without last-minute scrambles or disruption to productive work.

Sidebar: THE EMPLOYER ROLE IN ASSESSMENT

Understanding how assessment works makes sure that employers and tertiary education providers can work collaboratively



What counts

Understand the specific tasks, artefacts, and rubrics, authenticity requirements, and moderation processes.

When it happens

Find out when assessment takes place, the timing and duration of any site visits, how much protected learning time there needs to be.

Who does what

You need to understand who is going to be responsible for verifying and observing the apprentice and the roles of others in the assessment and how privacy, intellectual property, and any concerns will be handled.

Build in quality

Build in short “walk-through” questions where the apprentice explains what they did, why they chose that approach, and what changed as a result.

This keeps authenticity high without turning supervisors into second markers.

Define a cadence

Early in the apprenticeship, more frequent feedback and brief observations help turn routine tasks into credible evidence.

As capability grows, shift the emphasis to coordinating small work packages and leading improvements.

Mutual protection

Support the apprentice to meet privacy, client consent, and intellectual property requirements.



Deliver

Create the right learning and support

What you'll know by the end of this section:

- What the degree apprentice experience could look like
- Your obligations as an employer and the likely expectations of the degree apprentice
- How best to support the degree apprentice throughout their journey and who your partners are in that journey.

LEARNER EXPERIENCE SWIM LANE

Stage	Learner	Employer	Tertiary education provider
Discover and Apply	· Consider role fit and prepare CV · Attend information session	· Advertise roles · Signal inclusivity and supports	· Run briefings · Programme calendar and entry criteria
Screening	· Sit diagnostics, submit evidence of prior learning and ask questions	· Joint interview (focus on job readiness)	· Joint interview (focus on academic readiness), map prior learning.
Dual admissions	· Accept joint conditional offers	· Issue job offer	· Approve degree admission · Draft Training Agreement and Plan
Agreements and Plan	· Sign Training Agreement · Co-create Training Plan	· Sign Training Agreement · Co-create Training Plan · Confirm release time and supervisor	· Sign Training Agreement · Co-create Training Plan · Confirm academic schedule and advisor
Onboarding (week 1–2)	· Attend work and study inductions · Meet buddy/mentor, academic advisor and workplace supervisor	· Arrange induction and work schedule and assign buddy/mentor	· Arrange academic induction · Provide learning and assessment resources
Early ramp (week 3–6)	· Start tasks and capture evidence · Attend off-job learning	· Run early-briefs/debriefs, protect study time and check on wellbeing	· Quick check-ins · Monitor engagement and early progress
Week6 fit check	· Reflect on progress · Suggest changes	· Adjust workload and rotations · Confirm supports	· Monitoring and reflection
Term cycles (10–12 weeks)	· Attend tripartite reviews, do–learn–reflect and submit assessments	· Attend tripartite reviews · Provide tasks mapped to outcomes · Sign off, verify and assess evidence	· Attend tripartite reviews, teach and assess, run reviews and monitor progress
Breadth and rotations	· Complete planned off-job training and job shadowing	· Swap rotations and enable placements if there are any gaps	· Approve changes and assess evidence against course and programme outcomes
Capstone assessment	· Deliver project and present learning	· Release time for write-up	· Assess per rubric Consult external experts as needed
Completion and progression	· Graduate and seek provisional/ or professional registration (if applicable)	· Consider offering permanent or different role and plan professional development	· Confer degree, offer advanced learning opportunities and provide alumni support

OBLIGATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Degree apprentices are employees first and foremost. With that comes all the standard expectations of employment, which you'll be familiar with (see Sidebar).

The significant difference is that you're not just hiring a staff member, but you're formalising your training and development role within the structure offered by the degree. All with the added benefit of support from a tertiary education provider.

In practice, this means you'll have specific obligations documented in the apprentice's Training Plan. Some things that you'll want to think about include:

- The commitments in the Training Agreement and Training Plan will impact on how you run your business.
- Paying the tuition fees of the apprentice is a tangible example of your support for their development.
- You'll need to plan the work of the apprentice around their 'off-job' learning and make time for meetings between the apprentice and workplace supervisor.
- How information will be shared between the employer and the tertiary education provider, including what data and information systems the provider may use.
- Making sure that both you and the tertiary education provider are clear about your Health and Safety at Work obligations and responsibilities.
- How your roles may need to reflect the apprentice's context, particularly if the apprentice is new to your workplace, comes with less work experience or is being exposed to new settings.
- How any issues or disputes will be handled.

Note: You must pay degree apprentices at least the minimum wage. You cannot pay these employees the training minimum wage because that's only available for people over the age of 20 years who are enrolled in a recognised industry training programme (which degree apprenticeships are not).

Sidebar: OBLIGATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS



Basic and minimum requirements

Apprentices will have an employment agreement, must be paid at least the minimum wage, have paid and sick leave entitlements and the requirement to negotiate in good faith.



You have rights too

As an employer, your normal employment rights also apply, including deciding how you run your business, manage your employees and protecting your intellectual property.



Training will matter

The training agreements and training plans will shape the employment of the degree apprentice (see Training Agreements and Training Plans – an overview).



Paid time off to study

You will need to provide the apprentice with paid time off for study within the working week, but this won't need to be rigidly defined.



Opportunities

Give the apprentice opportunities to practice their new skills at work.



Align

Assist in the collection of evidence of learning and assessment, agree on what information will be shared and how, and support the transitions of the apprentice if things change.

SUPPORTING DEGREE APPRENTICES

Whether or not a degree apprentice feels supported plays a big role in their success.

Each degree apprentice may interact with many people as part of their learning.

Understanding their roles and contributions is essential because it helps you be deliberate about who you assign to work with the apprentice.

Examples of the people involved in guiding and supporting the apprentice include individuals within your own business, staff of the tertiary education provider, professional organisations, other apprentices, and others from the apprentice's own networks and those you have helped them forge.

The critical thing to remember is that you're not alone in supporting the apprentice.

Employers have a significant role to play but are part of a larger network of support. When deciding how to organise the guidance and support arrangements in your own business, think about the following questions:

- What are we already doing that the apprentice can 'plug into'?
- What expectations does the tertiary education provider have?
- What is distinctive about the support in the workplace?
- Who is best placed to offer workplace support?
- How can I best support my staff in supporting the apprentice?
- How can the tertiary education provider help your workplace supervisor(s) to be effective mentors, coaches and assessors?
- How do we keep this as simple as possible for everyone involved?

These questions will help you support the apprentice in the right ways at the right time and avoid duplicating the work of others (see Sidebar).

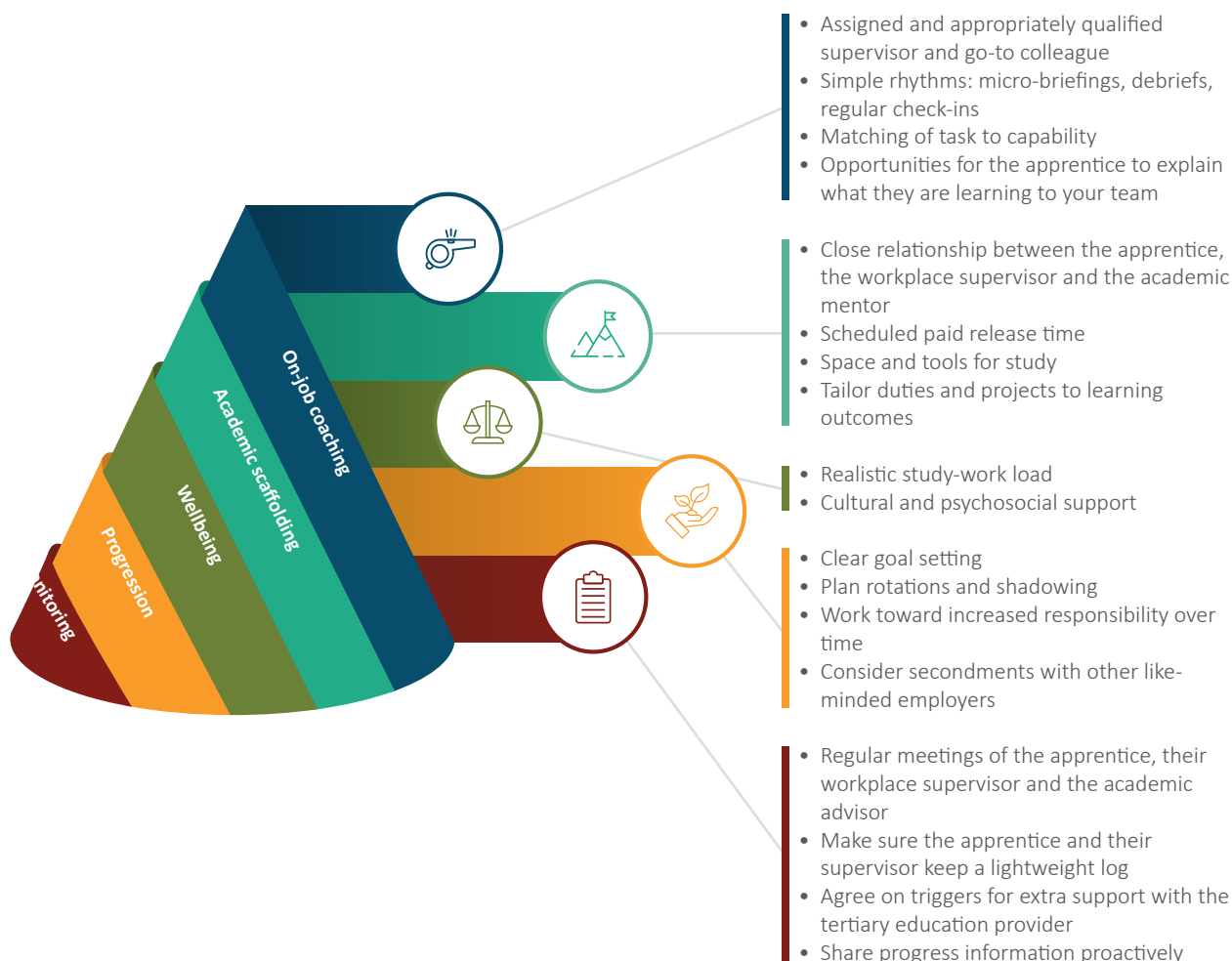
Some of these relationships might be new to you. Check our guidance on partnering for simple strategies to unlock your own potential.

Resources that can help you engage apprentices include:

- [Apprenticeship toolkit for employers](#)

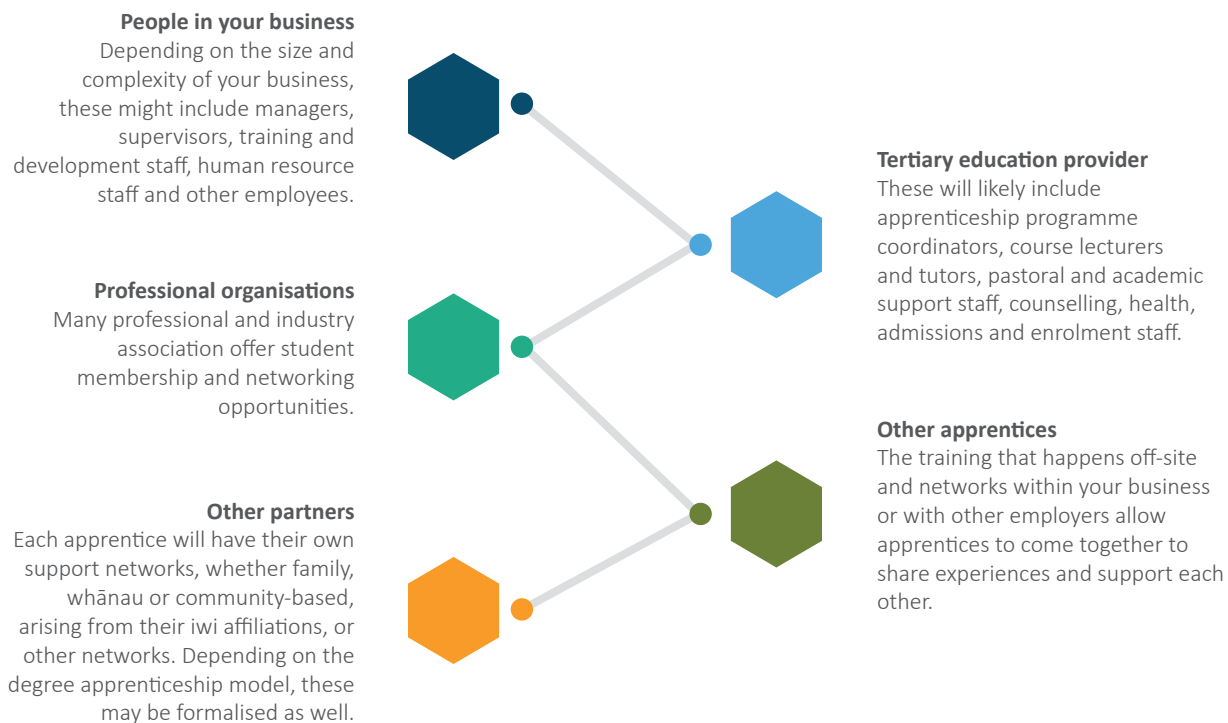
Sidebar: SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Degree apprentices need supervision from both the tertiary education provider and the workplace.



Sidebar: PARTNERS IN THE APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY

Employers are only part of a network that makes the degree apprenticeship journey a success





Sustain

Learn, improve and grow your impact

What you'll know by the end of this section:

- How you can best track the outcomes that apprentices gain
- How you can expand the impact of degree apprenticeships.

TRACKING OUTCOMES

Degree apprenticeships are associated with high productivity, the filling of skills gaps for businesses and improved staff morale and retention.

They give you advantages over your competitors by allowing you to secure skilled and talented staff and strengthen your market position.

Supporting a degree apprentice involves a mix of benefits and costs to any business.

Some of the benefits may be straightforward to track, such as

- Whether your apprentices complete their programme, and how long it takes them to do so.
- How long apprentices stay with your business, and if their turnover rate is higher or lower than the average for your business.
- What savings you get from lower recruitment and salary costs.

Others may be less obvious, such as the ability to take on different kinds of work, process and quality improvements, morale and an improved image and position in the market.

You don't need to track all of these but deciding what good looks like for your business by collating, monitoring and reviewing metrics can be a powerful tool for any business.

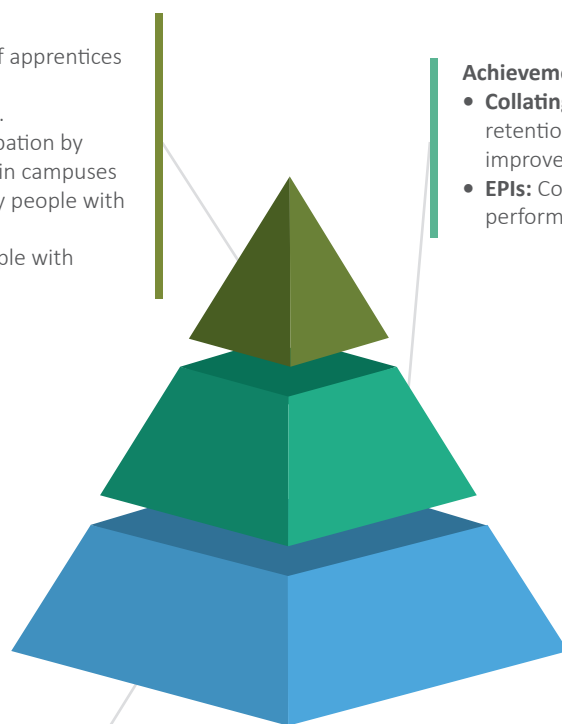
Sidebar: TRACKING OUTCOMES

Access

- **Completion rate:** percentage of apprentices completing each year.
- **Age:** Participation by age group.
- **Regional development:** Participation by learners in areas away from main campuses
- **Opening doors:** Participation by people with no prior tertiary achievement
- **Pathways:** Participation by people with lower-level qualifications

Achievements

- **Collating data on employer results:** retention rates, examples of productivity improvements or innovation
- **EPIs:** Compare your education outcome performance to comparable learner groups



Finances

- **Savings to the Government:** Tracking the cost efficiency of the option.
- **Earnings:** Monitoring the earnings of degree apprentices.
- **Resilience:** Calculating the contribution to your bottom line of provision that is 'countercyclical'.

EXPANDING YOUR IMPACT

Degree apprenticeships are relatively new in New Zealand, so you're likely to be part of the early cohort of employers involved with them.

By joining this movement, you benefit your business and contribute to the broader industry, profession, and community.

You'll likely find numerous opportunities to improve internal processes and those of your tertiary education partner. Here are practical ways to amplify the benefits without adding a lot of extra work:

- Talking about your experience with your peers.
- Highlighting the success of your degree apprentices in the media, to the community and to customers and clients.
- Giving regular feedback to the tertiary education provider that you work with, including drawing on input from your apprentice(s).
- Partnering with other employers to form a degree apprenticeship cluster or network.
- Ask your apprentice(s) to supervise any interns or students on clinical or professional placements.
- Joining professional, programme and industry advisory groups to help influence the design, revision, and recognition of degree apprenticeship programmes.
- Releasing senior staff to contribute to capstone assessments



Partner

Build partnerships that support shared goals

What you'll know by the end of this section:

This phase involves collaborating with others to help you achieve your goals.

You'll have many partnerships, relationships and connections that you've formed through your business. These may dovetail with those of the tertiary education provider and the apprentice themselves (see Design: Who will guide the degree apprentice?).

These partnerships also offer an opportunity to rethink how we deliver education and employment by including the voices and leadership of communities historically excluded from degree learning.

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships are a critical way to support degree apprenticeships.

There are variety of partners that you can collaborate with beyond the core relationship between the apprentice, your other staff and the tertiary education provider.

Talk to your apprentices and partners at their tertiary education provider about how to activate these relationships. We've identified some ways that these different groups can contribute and some important engagement principles to consider (see Sidebar).

Sidebar: PARTNERS

Engagement principles

- Engage early and maintain regular communication
- Observe appropriate tikanga Māori (protocols)
- Think about reciprocity
- Treat engagement as part of a long-term relationship
- Tailor your approach

Possible partner	Possible roles and contributions
Learners and whānau	<i>Your voice isn't an add-on. It's a source of design insight, quality assurance, and leadership.</i> Ask questions about cultural safety and accessibility when considering a degree apprenticeship programme or employer. Share feedback, good and bad, with providers and employers so they can adapt. Connect with trusted advisors (iwi, Pacific support staff, disability services) to help you navigate your journey. Know your rights and entitlements, and don't be afraid to advocate for them.
Employers	Co-educate, don't just employ. Engage early with iwi, Pacific, and disability organisations when developing roles, pathways, or recruitment plans. Train supervisors and managers in cultural safety, disability awareness, and inclusive supervision. Co-create work experiences that reflect diverse worldviews and accommodate different learning styles. Be flexible with workplace arrangements—hours, location, job design—to support diverse needs.

Industry Skills Boards, Professional Bodies, and Industry Associations	Qualification–occupation alignment: does the degree apprenticeship reflect current practice, industry standards, and emerging skills needs? Equity in access and outcomes: are Māori, Pacific peoples, and disabled peoples represented and supported throughout the programme? System-level insights: are there policy, regulatory, or funding settings that need adjustment to support inclusive degree apprenticeship delivery? Partnership promotion: are you encouraging members to form genuine partnerships with iwi, Pacific communities, and disability advocates? Sharing learning: are you capturing and promoting case studies, promising practice, and lessons learned from pilots and delivery?
Iwi Māori	<i>Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu — Adorn the bird with feathers and it will fly.</i> Co-design the kaupapa: ensure degree apprenticeships are grounded in Māori aspirations, values, and models of success. Create pathways into iwi-led industries: degree apprenticeships can strengthen succession in sectors such as infrastructure, trades, environmental management, and hauora. Support ākonga Māori holistically: provide cultural, pastoral, or financial support through iwi trusts or partnerships. Advocate for system accountability: ensure providers and employers uphold their responsibilities under Te Tiriti and advance Māori outcomes.
Pacific peoples' communities	<i>O le ala i le pule o le tautua — The pathway to leadership is through service.</i> Design for relationality: build learning journeys that reflect Pacific values—family, community, respect, and service. Strengthen cultural safety: ensure providers and employers understand Pacific learners' contexts and embed inclusive practices. Involve Pacific leaders: engage with Pacific educators, community groups, and workforce champions in both the public and private sectors. Support transition and navigation: use trusted advisors or community connectors to guide learners into and through degree apprenticeships.

Disabled peoples' organisations

Nothing about us, without us.

Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to both curriculum and workplace learning.

Co-design with disabled learners and advocates—not just “consult”.

Ensure accessibility of systems—application, enrolment, course materials, workplace environments.

Address ableism in both education and employment through training, policies, and monitoring.

Tertiary education providers

You are not just delivering content. You are creating the environment that determines who succeeds.

Partner with iwi and Māori organisations to ensure Te Tiriti is upheld through governance, pedagogy, and learner support.

Co-design with Pacific communities to ensure values like alofa, tautua, and vā are reflected in delivery.

Implement universal design principles and embed disability voice into programme, systems, and support.

Shift from learner deficit to institutional accountability—the burden of inclusion should not rest on the learner.